

Senior Circle

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www.tclifelong.org • www.tompkins-co.org/cofa

A circle is a group of people in which everyone has a front seat.

SENIOR FOCUS:

Shirley Cuykendall Invites You to Dinner!

The Dryden Methodist Church, with its elegant, tall spire was the setting for my recent conversation with Shirley Cuykendall. Shirley's warm smile greeted me as I sat down to find out more about this high energy woman who is the inspiration behind the popular free Community Dinners that take place at the Methodist Church four Wednesdays each month.

Sleepy Eye, the charmingly named town in south central Minnesota where Shirley Cuykendall grew up, belies the life of rural Minnesotans on an active family dairy farm. No stranger to hard work, Shirley recalls milking cows and sharing farm chores with her three brothers. "It was hard work, but a good life where I learned about life's lessons." Later, Shirley continued her academic education at the University of Minnesota where she studied Home Economics and also met her husband, Charles who was from the Upstate New York area. Shirley and her husband spent time in both Minnesota and New

York moving between various job opportunities as they raised their three children. "It was important to us as a family to be sure that our children knew their grandparents, so we tried to be sure job opportunities put us near them."

Professionally, Shirley worked at various schools in food service. Her last position, from which she retired after 13 years in 2005, was at the Lansing schools as Director of Food Service. Upon her retirement, Shirley committed to spending the next year doing things that needed attention in her home and also doing things that "she wanted to do."

Shirley described an incident for me which helped me to understand her next passion which is feeding those who may not have easy access to food. She recalls overhearing two students at Boynton Middle School discussing the fact that one of them did not have any food at home for breakfast and she consequently came to school starving. You can imagine why Shirley is a big fan of free and reduced food for students.

The Outreach Committee of the Dryden United Methodist Church, under Shirley's leadership, decided to offer to community members an




Shirley Cuykendall

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★ You're Invited to the
Tompkins County
Office for the Aging ★

★



Martha Stettinius

★

**Advisory Committee's
Annual Luncheon 2013**

★

**Annual Luncheon 2013
Keynote Speaker**

★

Martha Stettinius, Author of *Inside the Dementia Epidemic*


Certificates of appreciation to be awarded to:
"Senior Citizen of the Year" & "Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen"

Tuesday, May 21, 12:00pm
Clarion Hotel, 1 Sheraton Drive, Ithaca

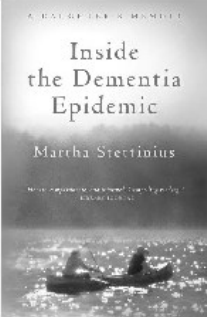
★

Meal includes choice of Eggplant Parmigiana or Chicken Cordon Bleu, Spinach Salad, Apple Pie, coffee/ tea, for \$17.00 including tax and tip.
Reservations Required!
Please RSVP by Tuesday, May 14, 2013

Questions: Call 274-5490 or email llunas@tompkins-co.org ★



UNLEASH
THE POWER
OF AGE
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2013




opportunity once a month to share a meal and not worry about the cost. In October of 2007, the first Free Community Dinner was served to 11 guests. The mission of the Community Dinners is to provide a hot, nutritionally balanced meal for residents of the Dryden area that may not be able to prepare or have the financial means to purchase a hot, balanced meal for themselves. A secondary, and equally important mission, is to provide a meal and socialization for those who normally eat alone. The Community Dinners became so popular that the church decided to offer them twice a month. Today, after reaching out to area churches, Community Dinners are held four times a month. Two other congregations, Holy Cross Catholic Community and Covenant Love Community now prepare meals on the additional Wednesdays. The average number of guests sharing dinner is about sixty-six.

Guests are encouraged to eat as much as they like – some return for seconds or thirds. This is a meal to be lingered over with friends and neighbors. Shirley, with her background in nutrition, plans the menus. She indicated that her intention is to provide good, nutritionally sound "comfort food". The dinners may bring back memories of family meals that the guests shared at a different time in their lives.

Shirley's vision now includes volunteers from area schools, residents from a Cortland ARC (Alternative Resources Choices) and an expanding number of church and community volunteers. "Each meal takes about twenty-four volunteers, from start to finish." she explained. When asked how is it possible to feed this many people so many times a month, Shirley replied, "The church provides the facility and we apply for grants and of course we have a tin can for donations if possible. Mostly, we pray a lot! It is a blessing for me to be able to do this. It is heartwarming to see the community-building that takes place, not only with the guests, but also the volunteers who get know each other as they work side by side."

You are cordially invited to attend


LIFELONG's 61st Annual Luncheon & Meeting



Lifelong

Thursday, May 16, 2013
12:00 Noon — 2:00 p.m.
Ramada Inn

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Rhoda Meador, Director,
Ithaca College Gerontology Institute
**"Nature's Influence on
Health and Happiness"**



Menu Choices
Chicken Marsala or
Broiled Salmon with Confetti Rice Pilaf,
or Eggplant Parmigiana with Angel Hair Pasta
all include Spinach Salad, Green Beans
Strawberry Shortcake

A donation of \$20.00 per person, includes lunch plus a chance to win door prizes!
RSVP for the luncheon by May 9
call 273-1511 or email to frontdesk@tclifelong.org
Lifelong "A Night on the Town" drawing at the close of the lunch

Non-Profit
Organization
PAID
Permit No. 375
Ithaca, NY
14850

Senior Circle
Lifelong, Enhancing the Second Half
119 W. Court St. • Ithaca, NY 14850
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Ithaca College and Cornell University Students Sponsor First Annual Senior Prom!

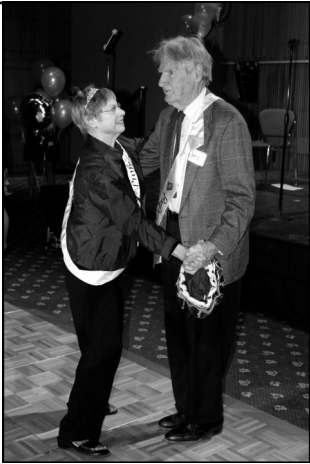
After four months of intense planning and preparation, the dedicated members of Ithaca College Project Generations were finally able to sit back and enjoy themselves during the 2013 First Annual Senior Citizen Prom. Held on Monday, March 25th in Emerson Suites of Ithaca College, this “Prom” was unlike any other. With over seventy senior citizens and more than one hundred students, the venue was filled with laughter, fun and great dance moves!

The evening included food served by Sodexo and the Ithaca College Campus and Events Services, music by the Ithaca College Jazz Club, flowers and decorations by Ithaca Flower shop and Ithaca Mainesource. A make-over and hair station by HiFashion Studios afforded attendants an opportunity to try out new makeup and hair fashions. A variety of local businesses donated an assortment of raffle prizes. Mayor Myrick stopped by to say hello and assist members of Ithaca College Project Generations hand out prizes to raffle winners and crown Jerry VanBuren and Lana Pifann the 2013 Prom King and Prom Queen. The club has received positive feedback from the night and intends on holding its Intergenerational Prom in the spring of 2014. They are getting excited for it already!

The members and executive board of Ithaca College Project Generations would like to express their gratitude to the many volunteers, including Cornell Project Generations, Gamma Delta Pi sorority sisters, and the Ithaca College Protestant Community. These wonderful organizations did a fantastic job helping throughout the course of the night from decorating and dancing to advertising and coat hanging. They would also like to thank Zachary Nelson at GIAC and Jillian Pendleton and her entire staff at Lifelong for assisting with transportation, advertisement and logistics of the night.

The ultimate goal of Ithaca College Project Generations is to connect various generations in search of life-long friendships, enjoyment and service to the community. The Ithaca College student organization decided to host this Prom as a “Way of giving back to those community members that give so much to us everyday,” Co-Presidents Mary Claire Hartford and Julianne Messier stated. The club also recognizes that without the Tompkins County Office of the Aging, Ithaca College Project Generations may never have had the opportunity to host the 2013 First Annual Senior Citizen Prom as well as many other community events. For three years, the Office of the Aging has worked with Ithaca College in matching students with older adults in the community. These students visit once a week, providing companionship, assistance with light housekeeping or respite for a caregiver. This past year, the Office of the Aging has also worked with Cornell University students to pair older adults in the community with their Project Generations club members as well.

If you are interested in finding out more information about our events or volunteer program, please contact Katrina Schickel at kschickel@tompkins-co.org or icprojectgenerations@gmail.com



Queen, Lana Pfann and King, Jerry Van Buren share a dance.

Three Seniors to Receive Awards at Office for the Aging’s Annual Luncheon on May 21.

Sue Ford of Berkshire, NY will receive an award as Outstanding Senior Citizen of the Year. Sue, who is a lifelong resident of Tompkins County, has raised a family including 13 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. She has worked at NYSEG for 34 years before retiring in 2002. Sue began volunteering as Travel Coordinator of three Senior Groups in Caroline, Lansing and Groton. Her role is to research events and arrange for transportation, tickets and meals. She attends to trip details and provides travel games to help groups pass the time pleasurably. Sue has also served as President of the Lansing Senior Group in 2008 and 2009. In addition, Sue helps with the Lansing United Methodist Church semi-annual rummage sale, Habitat for Humanity’s Women Build, and she is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Snyder Hill Cemetery Association.

Ilma Levine and Deborah Levin will receive an award for Outstanding Contribution by a Senior. Ilma and Debbie both have educational backgrounds in science. They began a lifelong friendship in the 1960’s while volunteering with children in Ithaca. Debbie and Ilma share a mutual interest in providing hands-on science and experiential learning opportunities for underserved children. They volunteered in an elementary school for 15 years, initially working out of their own station wagons, and eventually moving to a room which hosted science activities and a library of mice, hamsters and other animals. They gathered community support and founded Ithaca’s Sciencenter in 1983, whose mission it is to inspire excitement for science through programs that engage, educate, and empower. They coordinated thousands of volunteers to build exhibits, construct the museum building and offer field trips. They emphasized an enduring service to low income and minority children. Volunteering just shy of 50 years, Debbie and Ilma have collectively volunteered well over 200,000 hours in support of the youth of our community.

New Lifelong Learning Pilot Program at Titus Towers for Older Adults

Get Stronger As You Grow Older Yes, You CAN! Come and See!

Dr. Miriam E. Nelson, director of the John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition at Tufts University in Boston has noted “with every increasing decade of age, people become less and less active.” They move less and sit more.

The result is an epidemic of *SARCOPENIA* in the elderly in America. Sarcopenia is the loss of skeletal muscle mass that occurs as we grow older. This process begins at about age 25, at that time we lose only about 0.5 percent of muscle mass in our body each year. But this process accelerates as we pass 50. We lose more and more of the muscle mass in our body. We lose strength and begin to be *frail*. We slow down. We lose our sense of balance. Our joints and tendons become stiff and do not function well. The brain and mind begin to slow as well. Sarcopenia is an important independent predictor of disability and linked to poor balance, falls, and fractures. Sarcopenia often progresses to the extent that an older person loses his or her ability to live independently.

What Is Strength Training – How Does It Work?

Strength training is a fancy way of describing the process of building muscle power by lifting weights or working out against resistance. You are stretching the muscle to the point of straining it slightly This is the goal during weight lifting. And you set in motion the body’s natural muscle-building response. Over time, your muscle mass increases. You become less frail, you get stronger.

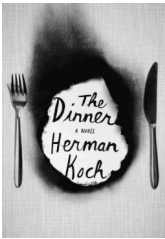
The Strength Training Program at Titus Towers:

The program will begin in June 2013. We will meet two times per week, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for one hour. Participants will need to attend both sessions and they will need to attend regularly to gain the benefits the program can provide. The program will be run by an experienced Public Health professional who has operated these Strength Training programs for over a decade.

Participants will need to register in advance. Registration dates will be in late May and will be announced. Space will be limited for the first six weeks of the pilot program. We will only be able to enroll 20-25 participants.

For more information or to register, please contact the Titus Towers Case Manager at 273-8629 X251 or email: CASEMANAGER@ITHACAH.COM

The Book Nook : The Dinner By Herman Koch



Are you looking for a new book for your book discussion group? *The Dinner*, by Herman Koch, might be your perfect next read. Set over a long dinner between two couples at an upscale Amsterdam restaurant, readers quickly learn that this is more than just a regular dinner party. Paul, a history teacher who is on leave from teaching, and his wife, Claire, meet Paul’s politician brother, Serge, and his wife, Babette. Serge is poised to possibly become a candidate for prime minister of the Netherlands, but he and his brother have a slight problem. Both men have 15-year old sons who have committed a horrible crime that is threatening to change the lives of both families.

Over the length of five courses, readers will slowly be drawn into the chilling and thought-provoking psychological thriller. Half way through, the crimet hat the two boys commit is revealed, but readers are already quickly learning that the families are more damaged than they originally seemed. A bestseller in Europe since 2009 with over a million copies in print, *The Dinner* has recently been released in the US, and quickly drew comparisons to the bestseller and book group favorite, *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. At times compelling and riveting, it is also an uncomfortable look at families and today’s society. A dark satire that has one of the most unreliable main characters in recent fiction, *The Dinner* is a book you soon won’t forget.

Sarah Glogowski
Reader’s Services Librarian
Tompkins County Public Library

Senior Services

Information and Referral

The Office for the Aging provides information and referral services for individuals and agencies concerning an array of issues affecting seniors. If you have questions, our staff is ready, willing and able to serve your needs. Please call the Office for the Aging at 274-5482, or visit us on the web at www.tompkins-co.org/cofa

Help With Yard Work

The Office for the Aging maintains a listing of people who are willing to do yard work for seniors on either a paid or volunteer basis. If you are in need of some help with your yard work, please give us a call at 274-5482.

Longview's Adult Day Program

This program has become the home away from home for many Tompkins County seniors, offering companionship, recreation, safety and security. The daily fee of \$38 includes personal supervision, recreational programs, morning and afternoon snacks as well as a hot, nutritious lunch. Longview's Adult Day Program is open from 9am to 3pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For more information call (607) 375-6320.

Need a Break? Project CARE Might Help!

The Office for the Aging's Project CARE program is designed to provide caregivers with a much-needed break. Project CARE matches seniors and their caregivers with volunteers who provide friendly visiting, respite, or might even be able to assist with some light housekeeping, yard work or errands. If you or someone you know would benefit from some help with the difficult work of caregiving, please contact Trina Schickel at the Office for the Aging, 274-5491. Additionally, if you are interested in volunteering, please call the Office for the Aging, 274-5491, for more information about Project CARE.

Options for In-Home Help

The Registry is a free service that links individuals in need of in-home help with independent job seekers. If you or your loved one are in need of an experienced housekeeper, personal aide, certified nurse's aide, LPN or RN, the Registry can provide you with referrals. The Registry prescreens and checks reference for all caregivers. You interview and negotiate the specific terms of employment with the caregiver. For more information, please contact the Registry Coordinator, Cheryl Baker, at the Finger Lakes Independence Center, 272-2433.

Maintain Your Independence

Wondering what you can do to make your home safer? The Office for the Aging is offering free home safety assessments. Call 274-5482 to have an Outreach Worker visit your home. Working with you, they will go through your house, room by room, to identify falls hazards. Afterwards, they will discuss options for addressing any falls hazards found. Offered by the Office for the Aging as part of the local Step Up to Stop Falls collaborative. Call 274-5482 for more information.

NY Connects: Long Term Care Assistance

NY Connects is a state-wide program offering information and referral for long term care services. The program is a partnership between Tompkins County Office for the Aging and Long Term Care Services through the Department of Social Services (DSS). The purpose of NY Connects is to provide accurate and unbiased information regarding long term care needs. Information and assistance is available to Tompkins County residents of all ages at no cost. NY Connects also takes referrals for such programs as Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), Medicaid Home Care Services, in-home assessments and case management. Also, NY Connects can take referrals for the Patient Review Instrument (PRI) which is the assessment required by NY State for placement in a nursing home. Contact NY Connects, Monday through Friday, 8:30-4:30 pm at 274-5222.

“New Medicare Savings Program Levels for 2013”

Many people may not realize that programs exist to help individuals and couples in paying their Medicare premiums. The income levels listed below, except for full Medicaid, include a \$20 deduction from the applicant's gross monthly income when calculating eligibility for Medicare Savings Programs. Below are the increased income and resource categories for 2013:

Full Medicaid for dual eligibles (Individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid) *Single:* Income below \$800/month and resources below \$14,400. *Couple:* Income below \$1,175/month and resources below \$21,150. This program pays for a wide range of medical care, services and supplies as well as premiums, coinsurance and deductible payments for Medicare beneficiaries.

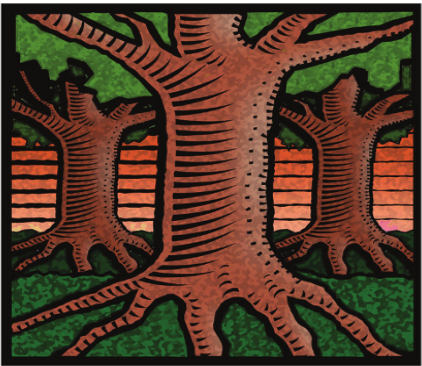
Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB) *Single:* Income below \$978/month. *Couple:* Income below \$1,313/month. This program can pay for Medicare Part A and/or Part B premiums, coinsurance and deductibles. An individual can be eligible for QMB only or for QMB and Medicaid.

Specified Low Income Medicare Beneficiary Program (SLIMB) *Single:* Income below \$1,169/month. *Couple:* Income below \$1,571/month. The program pays for the Medicare Part B premium only. Individuals can be eligible for SLIMB only or SLIMB and Medicaid (with a spend down). The applicant must have Medicare Part A to be eligible for this program.

Qualified Individual (QI) *Single:* Income below \$1,313/month. *Couple:* Income below \$1,765/month. This program pays for Medicare Part B premium only. Individuals cannot be eligible for QI and Medicaid. The applicant must have Medicare Part A to be eligible for this program.

Qualified Disabled and Working Individual (QDWI) *Single:* Income below \$1,935/month and resources below \$4,000. *Couple:* Income below \$2,605/month and resources below \$6,000. The program pays for Medicare Part A premium only. The applicant must be a disabled worker under age 65 who lost Part A benefits because of return to work.

Please review these categories and if you qualify call the County Office for the Aging at 607-274-5482 or Lifelong at 607-273-1511 for a HICAP appointment. Trained counselors will assist you with the application process. Please bring proof of income to your appointment. Applications for Medicare Savings Programs are submitted to the Department of Social Services.



Our roots in this community run strong.

We're more than your local bank.
Our roots are here, too.
We're your neighbors, friends and family.
Together, we build a better community.
That's the power of partnership.



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THANK YOU for joining us in the belief that everyone deserves the best end-of-life care available.



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Get Your GreenBack Tompkins – Take a Step to Save Energy and Money

By Karim Beers, the coordinator for Get Your Greenback Tompkins, a community-based campaign housed at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.

Venda Mae of Freeville put insulating curtains on her windows. Yayoi of Ithaca bought used, instead of new, furniture. Maria carpools to Ithaca every day. Travis of Newfield eats the meat he hunts.

What unites these actions? They all save energy and they all save money. And they're all among the 14,000 steps registered as part of Get Your GreenBack Tompkins, a community-based campaign to save energy and money in the areas of food, waste, transportation, and heating and electricity.

What steps can a resident take that would save the most energy? Here's our top four: drive less, tighten up your home, shop second-hand, and eat more beans. *And* here's why:

Drive

You're not alone if you don't want to hear this news: driving is probably the most polluting, costly, energy-inefficient and dangerous activity most of us do, everyday, in Tompkins County. Transportation is responsible for 35% of our county's carbon emissions, about 450,000 tons of CO₂ a year. That's about 9,000 pounds per person. And at around 60 cents a mile (AAA figures), that adds up to a lot of money.

But an individual can -- and many do -- greatly reduce those numbers by decreasing the distances they drive from home to work, shops and play. Many trips we make are short. Walk, bike, run, roll there. Some are longer. Bus or carpool when you can. If you are considering moving closer to work, consider the savings in transportation, as well as your contribution to decreased carbon emissions and other pollutants. Not only do your wallet, planet and health benefit, but so does the local economy. Virtually all of the money spent at the pump leaves the local economy. But for every 65 residents who take public transit regularly, one full-time living-wage job is created.

Tighten Up Your Home

The second biggest energy user in our personal lives is most likely our home. According to county figures, 20% of our community's carbon footprint comes from heating and powering our homes. Heating and electricity are also a significant cost -- and are only getting more expensive. If your bill seems too high it is probably because it IS too high -- your home is probably wasting energy. The big step here is to get a no-cost energy assessment, where trained professionals analyze your home to see if and where it's leaky and where it needs insulating. By following up with the recommendations you can see

30-60% energy savings, and serious reductions in your monthly utility bill. If you then go solar, or get a wood-burning or pellet stove, you'll be using 100% local and renewable energy. Plus, if you use a local contractor, you'll be contributing to good, green job creation: every 12 upgrades creates a full-time, living-wage jobs

Shop-Second-Hand

What happened to that hideous sweater you got for Christmas when you tossed it into your trash can? It, along with 400 tons of other people's trash each and every day, was picked up, trucked to and buried in landfills in poorer, neighboring counties -- like "Seneca Meadows" outside Waterloo in Seneca County. That adds up to about 150,000 tons of landfill waste a year, about the weight of a large pickup truck per person. Waste decomposes and releases methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases. According to one study, Americans throw away almost 70 pounds of clothing per person per year. Did you know that there are dozens of second-hand stores in Tompkins County, selling not only clothing for babies, youth and adults, but also jewelry, construction materials, household items, and sewing supplies?

Shopping second-hand not only keeps stuff out of the landfill, it also is much cheaper. I just bought a pair of name-brand corduroys from a thrift shop two weeks ago that would have cost me four times as much new. And the money you spend locally fuels local job growth. Mama Goose, a second-hand children's clothing store located in Ithaca's West End, reports that \$84 out of every \$100 spent at their store stays local, with its staff earning a living wage.

And yes, recycle and compost, too. Food scraps, plastics and paper are the top three materials that get landfilled, and can easily be diverted.

Eat More Beans

It isn't really about beans; it's about local (I just happen to know that you can buy some good, affordable, black and pinto beans from Cayuga Pure Organics in Brooktondale). It turns out the four biggest contributors to our footprint are production, food storage and preparation, transportation to grocery stores and restaurants, and food packaging. So the most ecological meal is one that requires little diesel-guzzling machinery and few chemical inputs (chemical fertilizers are made with fossil fuels and release greenhouse gases when decomposing), uses kitchen energy sparingly, requires little driving on your part, and doesn't come in packaging.

Like chili made from local beans that you bought in bulk and carried home on your bike, with tomatoes, onions and peppers you grew in your backyard garden. Or walking over to Northstar or Hazelnut Kitchen and enjoying some locally grown food there. You get the idea. While the miles the food has traveled is relatively minor (in fact, ecologically speaking, it's probably better to walk to the grocery store and buy pasta from

wheat grown elsewhere, than it is to drive and buy locally grown wheat), local food has many other advantages -- job creation, for example. Have you heard of Community Supported Agriculture? It takes about 100 people purchasing CSA shares to support a local farmer.

So now you know. Take a step. Help your community reach 40,000 steps by the end of this year. Go to getyourgreenback.org for inspiration and resources to help you translate your intentions into real money and energy savings, local jobs, and a better place to live for the next generation.

Need help with moving or downsizing?

If you, or a loved one, are thinking about moving, downsizing, or seeking Senior living services... friendly, knowledgeable help is available.



Liz Simple

contact Liz Norton at
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An Ithaca Community

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www.ithacarelongview.com



The **Senior Circle** is published four times a year by Lifelong, 119 West Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850, and contains information on activities and services which add to the quality of life for older adults and assists them to maintain an independent lifestyle.

Caregivers' Corner



By David Stoyell

Recent headlines in the news suggested that Tompkins County may be facing an "Alzheimer's epidemic" in the coming years. Although some may have interpreted the headlines as implying something in particular about our county, the report was not suggesting that there is "something in the water" or some other environmental factor that makes residents of Tompkins County more likely that people in other parts of the state or country to develop dementia.

It was just reminding us that, as deaths from other major diseases are decreasing due to advances in medicine and lifestyle changes, people in Tompkins County, as elsewhere, are living longer and therefore at greater risk for developing Alzheimer's or another dementia-causing disease that today has no cure. Also, with the increase in the older adult population due to the aging Baby Boomers, the number of people with Alzheimer's will also grow.

An Alzheimer's Epidemic?

Solidarity Needed

Sadly, the response to such news is sometimes limited to just hoping it doesn't happen to ourselves or our immediate family. But what is needed is that each of us be willing to join with others to confront this problem in two ways: by supporting research towards a cure or effective treatment of Alzheimer's disease and by doing our part in responding compassionately to individuals and families touched by Alzheimer's or a related dementia.

A survey of early-stage Alzheimer's patients asked what message they would like to convey to the rest of the world about their experience of the disease. One patient responded: "Alzheimer's isn't catching, you know!" He was referring to the experience mentioned by so many relatives of those with dementia: "Most of our friends have faded away." "Even some relatives stay away."

Feeling awkward and "not knowing what to say" is normal when relating to others who have suffered a loss that we have never had to grieve. However, withdrawing from friends who suffer such losses should not be normal behavior. We can learn how we can best relate to friends who have some dementia by asking their other family members what they enjoy doing and then making an effort to stay connected.

New Connections

In addition to keeping old friends, individuals and families impacted by dementia will benefit by making new connections in the community.

Individuals experiencing the early stages of Alzheimer's or other memory disorder can connect on the Internet with others who are learning to understand and cope with these diseases, and most importantly, learning to live in the present enjoying each new day.

Perspectives is a quarterly newsletter written that addresses the concerns, reflections, and coping skills of individuals with Alzheimer's or a related memory disorder. This newsletter can be subscribed to free online or mailed for \$20. Visit <http://adrc.ucsd.edu> or call 858-822-4800.

Relatives and friends make new connections by attending dementia workshops and/or support groups sponsored by the Caregivers' Resource Center of the Office for the Aging and others sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York. To stay abreast of upcoming programs, be sure to call the Office for the Aging to get on the mailing list for its free newsletter, **In Support of Caregivers**. It will be sent electronically or through the mail, according to your preference. To connect with the Alzheimer's Association, call 330-1647 or visit them online at www.alzcn.org.

Caregiver Resource Center

The Caregivers' Resource Center's lending library contains many books in its dementia section on a variety of topics of interest to families touched by these disorders. Check out this library while visiting the beautiful, new facility housing the Office for the Aging. While there, pick up a free copy of **Caring for a Person with Alzheimer's Disease**, an easy-to-use 104 page guide from the National Institute on Aging.

Call the Office for the Aging (274-5482) to speak to one of the staff of the about issues of concern to you, whether you are faced with a new diagnosis and trying to plan ahead or whether you are dealing with more advanced dementia and its challenges. If you need to talk and it's the middle of the night or a weekend, the 24-hour Helpline sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association is always there for you. Call 1-800-272-3900.

Although family still does the lion's share of the caring for family members in need of assistance, there are programs and services to learn about that may lighten the burden. **Resources for Caregivers in Tompkins County** is also available free of charge from the Office for the Aging and can be view online on its website at www.tompkins-co.org/cofa. (Click on **Local Resources for Older Adults**.)

CONIFER SENIOR COMMUNITIES IN ITHACA

CONIFER VILLAGE AT INTERLAKEN

3687 Conifer Drive
Interlaken, NY 14847

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Aging and Depression *The American Psychological Association*

Old age is often portrayed as a time of rest, reflection, and opportunities to do things that were put off while raising families and pursuing careers.

Unfortunately, the aging process is not always so idyllic. Late-life events such as chronic and debilitating medical disorders, loss of friends and loved ones and the inability to take part in once-cherished activities can take a heavy toll on an aging person's emotional well-being.

An older adult may also sense a loss of control over his or her life due to failing eyesight, hearing loss, and other physical changes, as well as external pressures such as limited financial resources. These and other issues often give rise to negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, loneliness, and lowered self-esteem, which in turn lead to social withdrawal and apathy.

Depression

Another, more serious outcome is chronic depression, or depression that is recurring and persistent. Chronic depression has both physical and mental consequences that may complicate an older adult's existing health condition and trigger new concerns.

There is evidence that some natural body changes associated with aging may increase a person's risk of experiencing depression. Recent studies suggest that lower concentrations of folate in the blood and nervous system may contribute to depression, mental impairment, and dementia. Researchers also suspect that there may be a link between the onset of late-life depression and Alzheimer's disease.

Regardless of its cause, depression can have alarming physical effects on older people. The mortality rate for elderly men and women suffering from both depression and feelings of loneliness is higher than for those who report satisfaction with their lives. Treatment programs for depressed elderly patients suffering from cardiovascular disease and other major illnesses usually take longer than normal, and are less successful. In addition, the feelings hopelessness and isolation that often spur thoughts of suicide are more prevalent among older adults, especially those with disabilities or confined to nursing homes.

A Risk to Daily Living

Depression can also have potentially harmful effects on an older adult's health in other ways. Depression can lead to eating habits that result in obesity or, conversely, can cause a significant loss of appetite and diminished energy levels, sometimes resulting in a condition known as geriatric anorexia.

Depressed older adults also experience higher rates of insomnia and memory loss. They also have longer than normal reaction times, increasing the hazards associated with cooking, driving, self-medication, and other tasks that require full attention.

What You Can Do

While aging is an inevitable part of life, depression need not be part of it. Researchers agree that early recognition, diagnosis, and treatment can counteract and prevent depression's emotional and physical consequences.

Here are some issues to consider in addressing depression in an older adult:

- Beware of physical limitations. Encourage an older adult to consult with a physician before making dietary changes or undertaking any new activity that may stress his or her stamina.
- Respect individual preferences. Because elderly people tend to be less amenable to lifestyle changes, they may be reluctant to adopt new habits or do things their peers find highly enjoyable. A psychologist who specializes in aging issues can help tailor an individualized strategy to combat depression.
- Be tactful. An older person

with fragile self-esteem may interpret well-intentioned encouragement as further proof of his or her declining condition. Others may resent any attempts at intervention. A psychologist can help friends and family members craft positive approaches for dealing with these and other sensitive issues.



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Sequestration Reduces Medicare Claims Payments

Due to the effect of sequestration on Federal funds, there was a two percent reduction in Medicare payments for services beginning April 1, 2013. There will be a two percent reduction in what Medicare pays to Medicare providers in the final payment (after deductible and co-insurance). The two percent reduction to providers cannot be passed on to Medicare beneficiaries and will not be paid by Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plans. Also, if the beneficiary obtains services from non-participating providers that do not accept assignment, payment is sent to the beneficiary. In this case the two percent reduction will be taken from the final payment to the beneficiary. For example, if a beneficiary has met the deductible and Medicare allows \$100 and pays 80 percent, instead of paying \$80 to the beneficiary the payment will be \$78.40

What is the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program?

New York State Office of Temporary Assistance and Disability will be funding the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program. The HEAP Cooling Program will provide for the purchase and installation of air conditioners not to exceed \$800 or a fan. A fan will be installed only if installation of an air conditioner is not appropriate for the dwelling. Whenever possible, window air conditioning units with an Energy Star rating will be installed. In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, a fan will be provided. Only one air conditioner will be provided per dwelling. No additional HEAP cash benefits are available.

When can I apply?

Applications for the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program will be accepted beginning April 1, 2013 through August 30, 2013, or until funds are exhausted, whichever comes first.

The HEAP Cooling Assistance Program’s benefits and services are provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible households until August 30, 2013 or until all of the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first.

Who is eligible?

Program requirements and eligibility criteria for the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program must be met by applicant households before the household is eligible for benefits and services. Eligibility requirements include filing an application, providing all necessary documentation, and the household must reside in an eligible living situation. In addition, the household must include an individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by heat. The applicant household’s monthly income amount must not exceed the HEAP income guidelines shown below

2012-13 HEAP MONTHLY INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES			
Household Size	Income Guideline	Household Size	Income Guideline
1	0 – 2,138	5	0 – 4,769
2	0 – 2,796	6	0 – 5,427
3	0 – 3,453	7	0 – 5,550
4	0 – 4,111	8	0 – 5,673

Please note that households that received only \$1.00 regular HEAP benefit payment amount are not eligible for the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program.

Households that currently have a working air conditioner less than five years old, as determined by the vendor, will not be eligible.

Households that received a HEAP funded air conditioner within the past 10 years are not eligible.

Who will install the air conditioner?

NYS OTDA has solicited Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) vendors to provide services for the HEAP Cooling Assistance Program. A participating vendor list can be obtained at your local Department of Social Services. It will be your responsibility to maintain the air conditioner. This includes the responsibility to remove, cover, store, and/or reinstall the unit or the installation sleeve after vendor installation.

Where do I apply?

You may apply for the HEAP Cooling Assistance by calling the Tompkins County Department of Social Services at 274-5264.



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Lifelong News

All events listed are held at Lifelong unless noted.

For more information and full listings of programs please check out our website at www.tclifelong.org Please call Lifelong at 273-1511 or email Jillian Pendleton at jpendleton@tclifelong.org to register for any of these events!



When Sitting Around is Good for You

by Sahej Caryn Sheckler, Chair Yoga Instructor

Every Friday morning at 10:00 there is a gathering of eager adults in the activities room at Lifelong at 119 W. Court St. They are different ages, shapes, colors and nationalities yet they all gather to honor one person. Who do all these individuals from different backgrounds have in common to celebrate? Each of these students will spend the next hour honoring *themselves*. All these people come together to practice chair yoga and meditation. Chair yoga is practiced while sitting in a chair, or in some cases standing with the chair close by for support, yet it has all the benefits of other types of yoga and is accessible to people with limitations that come with aging. At the end of the class, no matter how they feel when they walk into the room, they walk out happy, relaxed, more limber and stress-free with a well-earned sense of accomplishment.

Each week the class follows the same basic outline but the specific exercises and meditations change according to the needs of the students. To begin the class, the students are first guided through a series of breathing patterns designed to focus their attention on the very moment in question, to dismiss the earlier part of the day and release any anxiety about what may be ahead of them after class. The idea is to pay attention to the present, the here and now. The class recites two mantras following a few minutes of silent breathing; one mantra is to get in touch with their inner teacher and the other one is for protection. No one is required to chant but all are welcome to join in.

The physical exercises are fun, gentle stretches designed with specific goals. Surveying the class and asking how everybody is feeling determines exactly what the class will focus on. Working from the toes up through the body to the top of the head, the focus of class may be anything from stretching muscles to detoxifying the organs of the body, or working with the energy centers of the body or draining the lymph glands or simply building strength and stamina. A serious concern for all older adults is balance, and time is spent doing exercises designed for developing and maintaining balance. Sometimes a few extra minutes may be spent on the lower back and hips, other times the concentration will be on the neck and shoulders; it depends on the needs of the class.

The last part of the Friday morning chair yoga class is a ritual called shivasana, but in English we like to call it nap time. For students of all different disciplines of yoga, this is often the favorite part of class. The lights are dimmed, soft music is played and Caryn guides the class into a dreamlike state of deep relaxation.

FREE SUMMER MOVIE SERIES AT LIFELONG

Every Wednesday in July, come and enjoy a movie in the cool, air-conditioned comfort of Lifelong from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM. This summer, we're offering The Twilight Saga, the wildly popular movies which dominated the box office.

The Twilight Saga is a series of five romance fantasy films based on the four *Twilight series* novels by the American author Stephenie Meyer revolving around new-girl-in-town Bella Swan and the love triangle she forms with vampire Edward Cullen and rival werewolf Jacob Black. The films star Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, and Taylor Lautner. The series has grossed over \$2 billion in worldwide receipts and consists, to date, of five motion pictures.

1. 'Twilight' – Wednesday, July 3rd

Having moved to Washington to live with her dad for a while, Bella (Stewart) finds herself instantly fascinated by the strange and beautiful Cullen family.

2. 'New Moon' – Wednesday, July 10th

In *New Moon* the focus shifts from Bella and Edward to Bella and Jacob after Edward and the Cullen family leave town following a hairy incident at Bella's birthday party.

3. 'Eclipse' – Wednesday, July 17th

Edward's back in town after coming to his senses and realizing he can't deny the fact he and Bella are meant to be together. His return isn't greeted with cheers on the reservation as Jacob hasn't given up on trying to win over Bella.

4. 'Breaking Dawn Part 1' – Wednesday, July 24

The fourth book introduces a new, bizarre character that had fans guessing exactly how this new creature would be brought to life on the screen.

5. 'Breaking Dawn Part 2' – Wednesday, July 31

The final *Twilight* film finds our vampire heroes fighting off evil vampires and falling deeper in love.

Please call 273-1511 to register for these free movies.

Chair yoga is suitable for most adults. Not every student can do every exercise. That's fine. The most important instruction given each week is this: Don't hurt yourself. If you are asked to do something that you know is not right for your body, don't do it. Modify the task or skip it entirely. Every day is a new day. Maybe something was easier last week than it is this week. Maybe something is easier this week than last week. In this class it doesn't matter, nobody is judging anybody else. What matters is making the effort to get to class to honor yourself. In time, progress can be achieved. Where once it may have been daunting to raise an arm overhead, now it can be done without a second thought. Strength is gained. Flexibility stretches. Lung capacity increases. Patience grows. Friends are made.

Here is an example of the type of exercises that are practiced in class.

CHAIR PUSH-UPS FOR STRENGTH AND VITALITY

Sit in the middle of your chair with spine straight and elongated. Gently bring your chin in toward your throat. Align your feet under your knees, hip width apart. Press your feet into the floor. Rest your hands on your thighs.

How do I do it?

- Exhale and pull in your navel towards your spine. Lean all the way forward from your hip flexors, leading with your heart. Come forward enough that your torso is over your thighs. Keep your head in line with your spine.
- Using a big, deep inhale push your hands into your thighs and use the muscles in your arms to lift your torso back upright.
- Exhale, and bring your torso back down, keeping your spine parallel to the floor.
- Continue repeating the motions.
- Rest when you are done.

Start slowly and try and do this motion for one minute.

Make sure you keep you head and neck in alignment with your spine, coordinate your breath with the motion and use your arms to do the work, not your abdominal muscles.

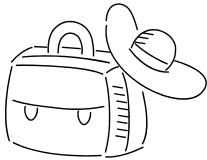
Intrigued? You are invited to come join this fun class at Lifelong. You don't need to bring anything with you, but it is a good idea to bring a water bottle. No prior registration is required, but please be on time. As with any new exercise program, please check with your health care provider to make sure this will be a suitable program for you.

Namaste.

Schedule for chair yoga classes:

- Tuesday and Thursday mornings 10:15 – 11:15 in the Ulysses Philomathic Library, Trumansburg
- Friday mornings 10 – 11:00 Lifelong, Ithaca.

DUST OFF YOUR SUITCASE



Does a springtime visit to New York City to see the Broadway show "Nice Work If You Can Get It" appeal to you? Perhaps a trip in the fall to the California Coast is more to your liking, with visits to San Francisco, Yosemite, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego. These are just two of the travel opportunities that Lifelong is promoting this year. Our trip to the New York State Fair was such fun last year that we'll be going again this summer. The Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce has arranged for a trip of a lifetime to China from October 24th to November 1st, travelling from JFK to Beijing. This fantastic all-inclusive tour visits the cultural, commercial and historical sites in Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou and the option of a 2-day side trip to Xi'an to see the amazing Terra-Cotta Warriors and nearby attractions. And, in October, we'll be taking a day trip to a jewel in our own back yard, Letchworth State Park.

For more information on these exciting excursions, please contact Lifelong at 273-1511, stop in at 119 West Court St., or check out our website at www.tclifelong.org.

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Lifelong’s 2013 Walk Program

Come walk with your friends, old or new, at Lifelong!



Ithaca’s Mayor Myrick with the “walkers”

Lifelong’s walk program is a great way to explore the beauty and culture of Tompkins County while increasing your strength, improving your balance and enjoying the company and knowledge of your peers. Our walk program coordinators, **Elke Schofield** and **Jane Zimmer**, are looking forward to sharing the walks they have planned.

We will walk every **other week** on **Wednesdays** and will meet in the Lifelong Lounge at 1:15 PM, promptly starting to walk at 1:30 PM. **You must be able to walk 1-2 miles.** When carpooling is necessary, a \$1-2 fee will be required for gasoline and parking, to be given to the driver. You will be informed either by e-mail or by phone 2-3 days ahead of the scheduled walk.

Date	Where to...
May 22	DeWitt Mall - Fibers Boutique and other stores to be visited in the Mall
June 5	Walk on The Commons, with ice cream stop at Green St. Pharmacy, ending at Six Mile Creek
June 19	Lower Treman Park
June 24	City Cemetery
July 10	Stewart Park
Aug. 7	South Side (Titus Tower, McGraw House)
Aug. 21	History Center
Sep. 4	I.C. Campus
Sep. 18	State Theatre (behind the scenes) and "Handwork" store to look around
Oct. 2	Greek Orthodox Church
Oct. 16	Beebe Lake - Fall leaves
Oct. 30	Trip to Trumansburg, visit to "Life So Sweet" (for chocolate lovers) and Salmon Pottery

REGISTRATION

If you want to sign up for the Lifelong walks for this year, please send an e-mail to **Elke Schofield** elke@schophoto.com or call her in the afternoon (607) 279-9895):

- Please include **your name, e-mail address, home address, and home telephone number and cell phone numbers.**
- Please put in the e-mail subject line:
Lifelong WALK PROGRAM .

All walkers must have a **Participant Waiver Form** on file at Lifelong. You may fill out the form prior to our first walk (April 17), **or** come to the Lifelong Lounge a little bit earlier that day to complete the form. Walkers who walked with us last year, can update the existing Participant and Waiver Form and initial it.

Starting Wednesday, May 1st Lifelong’s NEWFIELD ENHANCE FITNESS CLASS has a NEW LOCATION

Newfield Methodist Church
229 Main St, Newfield

The Public is Welcome and Encouraged to Participate call 273-1511
Enhance Fitness is a Balanced Exercise Program for the Older Adult
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| Control weight | Improve flexibility |
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Quilting and Needlework Social Group

Every Wednesday at Lifelong from 1pm-3pm

Calling all crafters to join this free social group!



Bring your own quilting or needlework project and enjoy the company of your peers, get tips and have lots of **FUN, FUN.....FUN!**

Northside-Southside News

NSSS Summer Schedule

May

Presentation: Wednesday, May 15th from, 10AM-11:30AM, Eric Acree will speak to the Legacy of Frederick Douglass. This presentation will reflect on the life of Frederick Douglass, as a reformer, writer, and statesman who fought against oppression of all kinds. An example of Douglass’ impact is seen in his relationship with President Abraham Lincoln. Douglas was largely responsible for convincing Lincoln to allow African Americans to fight in the Civil War. He also advised six other U.S. Presidents. These included Presidents Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Cleveland, and Harrison. Douglass was also the first Black man to hold a federal appointment that required Senate approval, and was the first Black ambassador to Haiti.

Lunch: Thursday, May 16th Lifelong’s Annual Luncheon at Ramada.

Special Event: Monday, May 20th from 1pm-2pm: Hip Hop at the Tompkins County History Center, an exhibit that will show images of the South Bronx when hip hop was first created in the early 70’s (will include a discussion with members of the History Center’s staff).

Shopping: Tuesday, May 21st from 10AM-1:45PM visit the Shops at Ithaca Mall.

Game time: Friday, May 24th from 2pm-4pm at Lifelong

Gathering: Wednesday, May 29th from 9:30am-10:30am at Lifelong: planning meeting for the July picnic.

June

Special Events: Saturday, June 8th: Greater Ithaca Activities Center Festival

Saturday, June 15th: Juneteenth at Southside Community Center

The Northside-Southside Program will be tabling at each event and we are looking for volunteers to help. At Juneteenth, we will be hosting the 2nd annual NSSS cake wheel, if you would like to help by donating a cake(s) or cake mix(es), please contact Jillian at 607.273.1511.

Shopping: Tuesday, June 18th from 10AM-1:45PM visit the Shops at Ithaca Mall.

Picnic and Game time: Wednesday, June 26th at Lucifer Falls (upper Treman State Park) meet at Lifelong at 11AM: bring a dish to pass for this fun picnic filled with games and exploration of the falls.



NSSS Cake Wheel at Southside’s Community Center ‘s Juneteenth Event 2012.

July

Gathering: Wednesday, July 10th from 9:30am-10:30am at Lifelong: final planning meeting for the July picnic.

Picnic and Game time: Wednesday, July 24th Northside Southside’s Annual Picnic at Titus Towers. Bring your favorite dish to pass and Lifelong will provide the burgers and dogs. We are happy to be inviting GIAC back for the 2nd year in a row to celebrate summer and friendship! Bring games you would like to play, there is plenty of space, all are welcome!

Shopping: Tuesday, July 23rd from 10AM-1:45PM visit the Shops at Ithaca Mall.

August

Gathering: Wednesday, August 7th at 9:30am: discussion of summer festivities and planning for fall programs.

Picnic and Game time: Wednesday, August 28th at Stewart Park meet at Lifelong at 11AM: bring a dish to pass for this fun picnic filled with games and exploration of the park.

Shopping: Tuesday, August 20th from 10AM-1:45PM visit the Shops at Ithaca Mall.



Northside Southside (NSSS) Picnic at Titus Tower with the GIAC Senior Group.

RSVP

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program



K. Minnix, Rsvp Director
Joyce Billing, RSVP Program Assistant
273-1511 or rsvp@tclifelong.org



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You can help a disabled American Veteran. Become a volunteer DVA (Disabled American Veterans) driver and transport ailing veterans to medical appointments at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Syracuse.

Since Congress cut the funding for the VA's Beneficiary Travel program DVA has been helping our country's service men and women for more than 20 years. Today, however, the DAV's roster of drivers is aging, so The Volunteer Transportation Network needs new recruits more than ever.

Without a free DVA ride to the VA, veterans of modest means and those who are too ill to drive themselves might miss important medical appointments. A free, friendly lift can make all the difference for a Tompkins County veteran.

If you are a safe driver, and have a valid license, and would like to drive our new fully equipped DVA van, give Bill Gleason at 591-7388 between 8 am-2 pm and find out more?

You might not strike it rich as a VA volunteer driver, but as the DAV points out, there is another significant benefit: *"The satisfaction of helping the nation's veterans in need."*



RSVP Volunteer Charlie Tilton shows off the new Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Van he drives to Syracuse once a month.

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RSVP 2013 Tax Preparation Program has just released current statistics for the 2012 tax year.

The Final Number of tax returns filed is: 727

That's how many Tompkins County returns, both Federal & State, were either e-filed or mailed this tax season.

In addition, approximately 60 other tax filers were aided in person or over the phone, giving them information and help with their tax returns.

CONGRATULATIONS to all who made it possible. Nearly 40 RSVP volunteers were involved in the program. 24 were certified tax preparers.



Smiling RSVP Tax Counselors Bob Anderson and Anna Raphaelidis help just one of many seniors who used TCE tax program to file their 2012 returns..

Thank You RSVP Sponsors

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Friends or Family as Advocates in Health Care Settings

Adapted from *Advocating for a Loved One*, Ithaca Journal column by Bob Ritter of the Cancer Resource Center

It can be helpful to a person to have an advocate present during appointments with doctors or other health care practitioners, or to be present for a patient in the hospital or skilled nursing facility. The most important role for an advocate is to understand and be supportive of the patient and the patient's wishes. Above all, a good advocate needs to be a good listener. Listen to the patient. And listen to the health professionals.

Most problems occur when loved ones confuse their own wishes and agenda with those of the patient. This isn't done maliciously. More often it's based on assumptions of what's best for the patient without actually asking the patient. It's entirely normal for loved ones to have their own agendas. But understand that the patient's agenda and loved ones' agenda aren't necessarily one and the same.

It can be helpful for patients and their loved ones to separately write down their wishes and priorities. Afterwards, compare the lists to see where they overlap and where they differ. This provides clarity and also a springboard for discussion. Ultimately, advocates need to realize that it is the patient and the patient's wishes that take precedence.

Some people don't think of themselves as advocates because they aren't loud and pushy. In fact, the best advocates are quiet forces who support mostly by their steadfast presence. One patient referred to his advocate as his "designated Listener." What a perfect description. We should all have designated listeners.

Helpful Tips for Advocates

- Talk with the patient before appointments to write down questions the patient wants to ask.
- Let the patient speak for him or herself.
- Take notes on the answers and on other things that the doctor says.
- Let the health care team do its work.
- Report changes in the patient's status to the health professionals, especially ones that aren't obvious. For example, "Sarah seems to have much less energy than she did last month."
- Understand the reality of the situation and maintain reasonable expectations.
- Think of yourself as part of the team. Ask both the patient and the professionals how you can be helpful.
- Be a bridge-builder. Connect with providers, other patients and family members.
- Think of ways to help with non-medical issues, e.g. household chores that free up the patient's time and energy.
- Recognize that not all questions have answers- especially those beginning with "why."
- Learn the routine at the health practitioner's office so that you can make the system work for you, not against you.
- Appreciate what the doctor is doing to help and say 'thank you' now and then- remember that you are both on the same side.

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Understanding Hospital “Observation Stays”



Hospital Services are not just covered by Medicare Part A. Some services, like outpatient services are covered under Medicare Part B, including minor surgeries, x-rays, and observation stays. The Medicare Rights Center offers the following explanation:

An observation stay happens when a physician orders that a patient stay in the hospital so their condition can be monitored but they are **not admitted** to the hospital. The key point is that the patient being held for observation is considered an outpatient, not an inpatient, even if they stay in the hospital overnight. Observation stays are usually reserved for hospital patients who come into the emergency room and have symptoms that require the hospital physicians to monitor them. The monitoring should lead to a decision about whether or not to admit the patient to the hospital with inpatient status or release the patient after observation.

Usually, the decision to admit or release someone in the hospital for observation is made in less than 48 hours. However, there are exceptional cases where observation status lasts longer. That is why it is very important to encourage all Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers to ask their doctors if they are inpatient or an outpatient. Oftentimes patients assume incorrectly they are an inpatient because they have been placed in a hospital bed.

Why is this distinction important? If a patient has Original Medicare, they will have a **20% coinsurance** after they meet their annual deductible of \$147 in 2013 (unless they have a Medicare Supplement plan that covers this coinsurance). If a patient has a Medicare Advantage plan, they will have to pay that plan’s co-payment for the observation stay because it is considered an outpatient service.

Also, **how someone is admitted to the hospital affects his or her transfer to skilled nursing facilities.** Someone with Medicare must have a three-day qualifying *inpatient stay* in a hospital to qualify for Medicare coverage of skilled nursing facility care. The day they become an inpatient counts toward the qualifying days and the day they are discharged does not. If someone entered the hospital under observation status, their status is that of an outpatient, which will affect whether they qualify for Medicare coverage of skilled nursing facility care.

Clients must ask the doctor about their inpatient status if they are to be sure they are an inpatient for the three qualifying days. In some cases, a hospital can retroactively assign someone to an inpatient status so they can qualify for Medicare coverage of skilled nursing care. This means that once someone leaves the hospital, their patient status can be changed from outpatient to inpatient. This happens rarely, and a beneficiary must appeal to the hospital to get a revised patient status determination.

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